



TRANSPORTATION SAFETY & ADVISORY COMMISSION

CITY OF HARRISONBURG, VIRGINIA

TO: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Members, Council members, City Manager Kurt Hodgen

FROM: Brad Reed, Transportation Planner

DATE: October 11, 2010

RE: Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission Summary from October 7, 2010 Meeting

The Transportation Safety & Advisory Commission met on Thursday October 7, 2010 at 9:00AM in Room 205 at the City Municipal Building, 345 S. Main St.

Members and Advisory Members present included: Bill Blessing (Chair), Thanh Dang (Public Works), Brad Reed (Public Works), Drew Williams (Public Works), Sgt. William Keller (Police), Diane Roll (Police), Len Van Wyk (citizen), Calvin Ferrell (citizen), Lee Eshelman (JMU), Doug Stader (DMV)

Citizens are always provided the opportunity to voice their views/concerns about any item before the commission. It is the policy of the Commission to move the agenda item to the beginning of the meeting when citizens attend Commission meetings to avoid detaining citizens for the entire meeting. However, any citizen is welcome to stay for the entire meeting.

Welcome

Old Business

1. Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee update

Ms. Dang related the key points from the September 28 first meeting of the Bicycle & Pedestrian Subcommittee. The summary for this meeting can be found on the City website at the following address: <http://www.harrisonburgva.gov/index.php?id=1088> . The group agreed that Subcommittee meeting notes should be sent out with the Commission meeting notes.

2. Sheetz & Chamber of Commerce entrances on Vine St

Mr. Reed informed the Commission that Sheetz failed to meet the October 4th deadline given to them by City staff by which they needed to reach a signed agreement for resolving the issue with their entrance on Vine Street. A couple minor details on staff's 7/28 letter and proposed plan were cited by Sheetz as reasons for their delay. The Commission and staff agreed to try to garner plan approval from Sheetz as soon as possible. If an agreement cannot be reached with Sheetz, staff will confer with the Commission to make a recommendation to City Council for the installation of delineators on the double yellow line of Vine Street to physically prohibit left turns.

3. Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program - Old Town update

Ms. Dang and Mr. Reed briefly summarized the proceedings of the October 4 meeting of the Old Town Neighborhood representative group, wherein the results of a second traffic study with JMU in session were discussed and the traffic calming plan was revised to be presented at the full neighborhood meeting on October 18th. Ms. Dang explained that a neighborhood representative, John McGehee, will be presenting the traffic calming plan at this meeting with support from City staff. After this meeting, neighborhood recommendations will be incorporated into a final traffic calming plan, which will be presented to this Commission, then brought before City Council for final approval and funding allocation. The tentative traffic calming plan was shown to the Commission and there was discussion regarding how the Bruce Street half closure would work and the plan's impacts on snow plowing operations.

4. Request for crosswalk on east side of E Market St and Mason St intersection

Ms. Dang related staff's recommendation to forego the installation of a crosswalk at this location due to the high number of potential vehicular conflicts from northbound right turns and southbound left turns. Staff took into consideration that this matter did not arise in discussion with the Old Town Neighborhood and that Public Works only heard concern from a single party about the lack of a crosswalk. The Commission recommended that no action be taken at present and that this matter be reevaluated when conditions change, preferably after traffic calming measures are installed in Old Town.

5. JMU Arboretum crosswalks and trail

Ms. Dang explained that this issue was discussed by the Subcommittee, which expressed interest in seeing the Arboretum path paved and lighted for bicycles and pedestrians. The group discussed City staff's recommendation to remove one of the two crosswalks that JMU painted to streamline the intersection. Mr. Eshelman agreed that one of the crossings should be removed and shared JMU's Facilities Maintenance Department's estimate for completion of the path. It is estimated that paving the path from the end of City maintenance near Neff Ave to University Blvd with lighting and emergency phones would cost approximately \$250,000.

Mr. Eshelman also recommended that a lighted crosswalk be installed on Neff Ave from Sunchase Apartments to the Arboretum trail. The Commission was in agreement with this recommendation and would like to see it analyzed by a group led by Mr. Eshelman.

6. Request for additional street lighting on College Ave

Mr. Williams explained that this issue stayed on the docket for so long due to the fact that HEC's power lines ran to the rear of the lots on College Ave, meaning that there were no poles along the street on which to mount lighting. HEC plans to install poles and lighting on College Ave to meet this need.

7. Request for additional street lighting on Reservoir St

Mr. Williams informed the Commission that HEC plans to move forward with installing additional street lighting on Reservoir Street between Lucy Dr and Stonewall Dr.

8. Update on Brook Ave no parking near Graham Packaging

Mr. Reed shared that no parking signs were installed on Brook Ave to make space for trucks to maneuver into Graham Packaging's loading bay. The parking restriction appears to be working successfully and there are no outstanding concerns being voiced to Public Works from residents impacted by the change.

9. Traffic signal removal studies

Mr. Reed explained that Public Works staff have studied the intersections of Mason St & Bruce St and S High St & Pear St for the purpose of removing the traffic signals.

The warrant study performed at Mason & Bruce found that the existing signal is not warranted. No accidents related to the design and/or control of the intersection occurred during the past year. Mr. Williams explained that this signal was installed because Mason St used to be the truck route, but is no longer. Staff recommended to City Council for the signal's removal in 2008, but there were concerns about pedestrian safety due to the lacking of existing pedestrian crossings on Mason St. Pedestrian crossing safety will be improved by means of installing thermoplastic crosswalks at this intersection and others along Mason St through the Old Town traffic calming plan. The Department of Public Transportation (HDPT) also had a concern about the signal's removal, worrying that busses would have a more difficult time turning off of Bruce St onto Mason St. This concern will be addressed by HDPT when they move the bus transfer station from the Hardesty Higgins house to a new location, as has been in their plans for some time.

Mr. Reed went on to explain that the S High St & Pear St intersection was installed as a temporary signal to handle detoured Pear St traffic during the construction of Phase I of the Stone Spring - Erickson road project. This signal was proposed for removal to return traffic patterns to their original state prior to construction. No accidents occurred in the year prior to the signal's installation that could have been prevented by a traffic signal and no accidents took place in the past year related to the design and/or control of the intersection. Public Works staff suggested the possibility of studying a right turn only condition for traffic turning off of Pear St onto S High St to improve traffic flow and safety. The Commission agreed with this suggestion and recommended that the right turn only condition be studied if the intersection is found to operate unsatisfactorily after the signal is removed.

The Commission recommended for the removal of both traffic signals. City staff will present their findings and the Commission's recommendation to City Council in the near future.

10. Removal of exclusive crosswalk at S Main St & Bluestone Dr

Mr. Reed informed the Commission that Public Works staff will be partnering with JMU to assess the possible removal of the exclusive pedestrian crossing at S Main St & Bluestone Dr. Removal of this pedestrian-only signal phase would encourage use of the much safer viaduct for crossing S Main St. Mr. Reed briefly covered the results of preliminary traffic modeling, which showed a significant decrease in vehicular delay at Bluestone Dr along with greatly improved performance of the entire S Main St traffic signal system spanning from Pleasant Hill Rd to Cantrell Ave.

Mr. Eshelman and Mr. Reed went on to explain that the pedestrian crossings at the intersection would remain and that only the exclusive movement would be removed. A pedestrian study was proposed to determine crossing patterns and volume of use. This data would be used to determine the most appropriate measures for maintaining pedestrian safety at the intersection. Mr. Van Wyk proposed that staff consider the use of a leading pedestrian interval, or advance walk, to help pedestrian establish presence in the crosswalk prior to vehicular movement. Staff agreed that this would be an option for consideration. The Commission recommended that City staff and JMU move forward with this study.

Adjourn